

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 034718
ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 L-03 SS-15 SSO-00 /031 R

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APPROVED BY ARA-LA/PAN:EJNADEAU

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 034718

CANALNEGS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PN

SUBJECT:U.S. PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: ACTIVITIES REPORT

I.

THIS IS MESSAGE NO. 2 FROM THE DEPARTMENT APPLICABLE TO THE
FEBRUARY 1977 NEGOTIATIONS IN PANAMA, DESPATCHED FROM ARA/
PAN AT 5:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 15.

II. BRIEFING ITEMS.

A. MEDIA COVERAGE -- RESUMPTION OF CANAL TALKS CONTINUES
AS ITEM ON TV AND RADIO NEWSCASTS WITH EMPHASIS ON TORRIJOS
STATEMENT THAT US PRESENCE MUST END BY 2000. SCALI ON
MONDAY "GOOD MORNING, AMERICA" SHOW SAID PRESIDENT HAD
DEMONSTRATED PERSONAL COMMITMENT BY MEETING NEGOTIATORS
PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR PANAMA. ALSO OBSERVED THAT
LINOWITZ APPOINTMENT SUGGESTS CARTER INTENDS TO BACK AWAY
FROM CAMPAIGN COMMENT RE CONTINUING US PRACTICAL CONTROL OF
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PAGE 02 STATE 034718

CANAL.

B. DRUMMOND -- AT NOON PRESS BRIEFING KINSOLVING AGAI
RAISED DRUMMOND ISSUE AND SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT EMBASSY
PANAMA'S NOTE ON SUBJECT WAS IN NATURE OF A PROTEST.

LUCIER FROM SENATOR HELM'S OFFICE CALLED TO REQUEST

WRITTEN SUMMARY OF EVENTS, NATURE OF EMBASSY'S PROTEST INCLUDING COPY OF 1949 AGREEMENT, AND GOP RESPONSE. HE CHARACTERIZED DETENTION AS GOP INTERVENTION IN U.S. JUDICIAL PROCESS. PLAN ON GOING OVER OUR RESPONSE WITH LUCIER PRIOR TO MAKING IT AVAILABLE TO LUCIER.

C. CONGRESSIONAL -- REP. JOHN MURPHY HAS SENT PRESIDENT LENGTHY LETTER EXPRESSING ALARM THAT PRESIDENT APPEARS TO BE ALTERING CAMPAIGN POSITION RE CONTINUED U.S. CONTROL OVER CANAL. LETTER EMPHASIZES ALLEGED COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PANAMA AND CITES BUNKER STATEMENT IN 1964 OAS DEBATE THAT PANAMANIAN RIOTERS INFILTRATED BY EXTREMISTS, INCLUDING PERSONS TRAINED IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. ALSO COMMENTS AT LENGTH ON ALLEGED CONTACTS BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER (SIC) FABIAN VELARDE AND CUBAN OFFICIALS. REPLY IS BEING PREPARED FOR SIGNATURE BY WHITE HOUSE STAFF.

D. ARMORED CARS -- SECOND SHIPMENT OF ARMORED CARS (12) ORDERED BY GOP LAST SUMMER IN COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN BALBOA ON THE SANTA LUCIA FEBRUARY 21ST. AS YOU ARE AWARE INITIAL SHIPMENT OF FOUR ARMORED CARS GENERATED A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONALS AS WELL AS COMMENT IN ANDERSON COLUMN AND OTHER NEWS REPORTING.

E. UN -- IO IS DRAFTING CABLE RECOMMENDING THAT WE TAKE ADVANCE BILATERAL ACTION TO HEAD OFF CONFRONTATION OVER A PROBABLE PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION ON THE CANAL ISSUE AT THE UN WATER CONFERENCE (MARCH 14 - 25). NEGOTIATORS MAY WISH CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 034718

TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS OVERALL APPROPRIATENESS OF SUCH PRESSURE TACTICS AT THIS TIME.

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. MILITARY EXERCISES - WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE COMMENTS/CLEARANCE ON BIFF FURY I WHICH IS AN AUGMENTED INFANTRY BRIGADE FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE WITH A SCENARIO DEPICTING A DETERIORATING POLITICO-MILITARY SITUATION POSING A CONVENTIONAL THREAT TO THE CANAL. EXERCISE IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10 TO 25. WE PLAN TO DEFER COMMENT UNTIL YOUR RETURN AND SUGGEST THAT YOU REVIEW THE DESIRABILITY OF GOING AHEAD WITH THIS EXERCISE WHILE YOU ARE IN PANAMA.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CANALS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE034718
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LA/PAN:EJNADEAU/KGUTHRIE:LKB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770054-0388
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770238/aaaabidw.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 46264bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3313383
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: ACTIVITIES REPORT I. THIS IS MESSAGE NO. 2 FROM THE DEPARTMENT APPLICAB
TAGS: PFOR, PN, US, PQ
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/46264bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009